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CURE OF SCROFULOUS DISEASES ATTRIBUTED
TO THE ROYAL TOUCH.

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THE subject I propose to bring before you is the custom of touching by the Sovereigns of this country for the cure of scrofula, as recorded chiefly by medical authorities who lived during the five or six centuries it prevailed, and illustrated by the observations of historians and other writers of repute. It has scarcely been noticed by enquirers of this century; and it is due to a professional friend,² whose attention had been directed to it, to premise that he first suggested the enquiry to me, and pointed out many sources of information. Such as the facts are, collected from the multifarious works throughout which they are scattered, I have thought they are worthy of being brought together, and that in their present shape they will not be undeserving of the attention of those who take interest in the investigation of our Natural History and Antiquities.

The disease, which is still seen by surgeons in its most aggravated and inveterate forms, though less frequently perhaps than formerly, seems to have been peculiarly the scourge, as it was the inheritance, of the mixed races settled in this island. Its first outbreaks are generally seen in the glands; they swell, become inflamed, the tissues around partake of the inflammation,—matter, the product of inflammation, forms and is discharged through the skin, which opens by ulceration. In mild and otherwise favourable cases, where the patient is young, or free from more serious constitutional disease, the mischief ends here; the wounds heal, the glands return almost to their former diminutive size, and the patient

¹ This paper was originally addressed to the Ashmolean Society at Oxford, and was afterwards read at a meeting of the Archaeological Institute, in London. And this seems a fit opportunity for acknow-

ledging the kindness with which I have been allowed access to the Bodleian and Radcliffe Libraries.

² Mr. H. Spencer Smith, Senior Assistant Surgeon to St. Mary's Hospital,

recovers without any damage beyond the scars left by the wounds as they heal. In all its phases it is of a lingering nature, slow to yield to known remedies, and showing itself, when the constitutional taint is fully developed, by extensive ravages in every part of the bodily system. The name of the King's Evil, or *Morbus Regius*, was not always restricted to this disease. Jaundice, called also *aurigo*, from the golden colour of the skin, was also distinguished by this name;³ and, it is said, the Kings of Hungary had the power of curing it.⁴ Leprosy has also been known under the same name.⁵ But it was to scrofula that the name of the King's Evil was confined in England; and for it alone the Royal Touch was sought, as a remedy in every stage of the disease.

Upon the application of some of the King's nobles, or of the poor themselves who were diseased, a certain day was appointed by Proclamation for a "Public Healing."⁶ Here it may be well to observe, that *healing* and *touching* were used synonymously at that time.⁷ The patients who applied are described as being "young or old, rich or poor, beautiful or deformed," no exception was made:⁸ and that none might approach the Royal presence but those really troubled with the evil, several officers were appointed. Among the most

London, and Lecturer on Surgery; whose intimate acquaintance with subjects of medical literature is well known.

³ Ut mala quem scabies, ut morbus regius urget,
Aut fanaticus error, et iracunda Diana,
Vesanum tetigisse timent fugiunt que poetam,
Qui sapiunt.—*Horat. de Arte Poet.*, 453.
Morbus, quem, interdum arquatum, interdum regium, nominant. * * * Utendum est lecto etiam, et conclavi cultiore, usu, loco, ludis, lasciviâ, aliis per quæ mens exhilaretur: ob quæ regius morbus dictus videtur.—*Celsus, de Medic.*, lib. iii., c. 24.

⁴ Regibus Hungariæ arquati morbi (icterum vocant,) curationem datam ferunt.—*Andreas Laurentius, de mirabili strumas sanandi vi*, Paris, 1609, p. 31.

⁵ Vir corpore et animâ leprosus, et interiùs exteriusque morbo Regio corruptus. *Rufinus, Eccles. Hist.*, lib. x. c. 25. Post aliquantum tempus computruit morbo Regio. *S. Hieron.*, lib. ii. adv. *Rufinum*, quoted by *Du Cange, Glossar.* Also *Comment. in Isai. xxxviii.*, 21, and *Epist. ad Pammach.* lxvi., 5. Pope Zacharias (about A.D. 750) mentions it, *Bonifac. Epist. cxlii.*, p. 213, ed. Serarii:

he writes of horses having it; that it was sometimes hereditary and from birth, and that it was contagious. For these references I am indebted to the Rev. R. Hussey, *Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History*.

⁶ The ceremonies are fully described by *William Tooker, D.D., Dean of Lichfield, Charisma, sive donum Sanationis: seu explicatio totius quæstionis de mirabilium sanitatum gratiâ, &c.* London, 1597, cap. vii.; and *John Browne, Charisma Basilicon, or the Royal Gift of Healing Strumaes or King's Evil Swellings, &c.* London, 1684, chap. vii.

⁷ *William Beckett, A Free and Impartial Enquiry into the antiquity and efficacy of Touching for the cure of the King's Evil.* London, 1722, pp. 33, 34.

⁸ Hath not the French, Dutch, Scotch, Irish, Welsh and English been all happy partakers of the benefits of His Majesty's gracious touch? Hath there been scarce any city, town, or country which cannot speak well of his curative faculty? Has there, or is there scarce a street in this populous city, that hath not found the benefit of his sacred hand?—*Browne, Char. Bas.*, chap. viii.

important of these were the Surgeons in waiting, before whom the applicants were required to appear before they could be presented at the Healing. The first necessary was a certificate from the Minister and Churchwardens that the patient was never before touched.⁹ This had been found expedient, as many unworthy persons applied a second time, rather, it was thought, for the gold given at the Healing than with the hope of obtaining relief from their sufferings: and as counterfeit certificates were often brought, a Proclamation in January, 1683, required "all Ministers and Churchwardens to be very careful to examine into the truth before they give such certificates, and also to keep a register of all certificates they shall from time to time give."¹ For many years such a register was preserved in St. Martin's Church at Leicester. At Stanton St. John's, near Oxford, this entry is said to be in the parish register:²—

"AN ACCOUNT OF CERTIFICATES GIVEN OF PERSONS HAVING NOT BEFORE BEEN TOUCHED FOR THE KING'S EVIL.

"Feb. 25. 1683, 4.—A certificate given concerning Thomas Grant, son of Thomas and Amy Grant.

"1686, Sept. 5.—I gave a certificate for Mr. Mason's daughters Alice and Avice, who were touched by the King, Sept. 19. as Mr. Mason told me.

"1705, Mar. 25.—I gave a certificate concerning Ralph Gilbert's son, Ralph, not being formerly touched for the King's Evil."

At Wadhurst, in Sussex, a copy of an original certificate is preserved in the parish register.³ Probably in other parishes similar notices will be found.

These certificates were taken to the Surgeon in waiting, at his private residence. He examined the patients to satisfy himself of the existence and real nature of the disease, and countersigned the certificates, or gave other tickets to admit them to the Healing; and it was his duty to acquaint them

⁹ Proclamation 1625, Conway Papers, and Nicholls, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. ii., p. 499, "Carte," note.

L'Estrange's *Alliance of Divine Offices*, Oxford, 1846.

¹ An original copy of this Proclamation is preserved in the Bodleian Library, pasted at the end of a Prayer-Book, folio, London, 1687; and it is printed among the additional notes at the end of

² Letters written by Eminent Persons in the 17th and 18th centuries, &c. i. 250. The registers of Stanton St. John's, and also of Stanton Harcourt, have been searched without finding these entries.

³ Nicholls, *Literary Anecd.*

with the day appointed for the ceremony. It seems to have been the farther duty of Queen Elizabeth's Surgeons to see that any offensive ulcer was covered with a plaster, which should hide the sore without affording any remedy to the disease. The Surgeon's duty was very laborious, and the necessary attendance at his house was often very tedious to the poor people, many of them coming from a distance. Evelyn (Diary, 28 March, 1684) records an unfortunate accident: "There was so great a concourse of people with their children to be touched for the evil, that six or seven were crushed to death by pressing at the chirurgeon's door for tickets."⁴

The Clerk of the Closet, generally one of the Bishops, had charge of the gold distributed at the Healings, and was a check to the Surgeons. Under him was the Closet Keeper, who kept a register, under the hand of the chief Surgeon, with an account of the numbers who were healed, and received medals: he also gave a receipt to the Exchequer for the gold received. He attended the Healings with the gold on his arms ready strung, and presented it to the Clerk of the Closet.

The day being come, which was usually a Sunday, or some other festival,⁵ the time generally after Morning Prayer, the chief officer of the Yeomen of the Guard places the sick people in convenient order. The King enters his chair uncovered, being surrounded by his nobles and many other spectators. One of the Chaplains in attendance then begins the Gospel, taken from the last chapter of St. Mark, at the fourteenth verse—the Gospel appointed for Ascension Day. At the eighteenth verse, "They shall lay their hands on the sick; and they shall recover," the Surgeons in waiting, after making three obeisances, bring up the sick in order. The chief Surgeon delivers them one by one on their knees to the King, who applies his hands freely round and about their necks:⁶ which done, the other Surgeon

⁴ In the London Gazette, 2180, is a notice, dated Whitehall, 8 Oct. 1686, that "His Majesty is graciously pleased to appoint to heal weekly on Friday, and hath commanded his physicians and chirurgeons to attend at the office appointed for that purpose at the Meuse, upon Thursday in the afternoon, to give out tickets."—Nicholls, *Lit. Anecd.*, vol. ii.

⁵ A Friday—especially Good Friday—was sometimes appointed, Browne, *Char. Bas.*, p. 106, 171; and Saturday, *Mercurius Politicus*, June 1660, quoted in *Rees's Cyclopaedia*, "Evil."

⁶ Evelyn, a spectator, observes, "The King strokes their faces, or cheeks, with both his hands at once."—*Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 323.

receives the patients from him, and passes them on, to be brought up again to receive the gold. The words of the eighteenth verse are repeated by the Chaplain between every healing, till all the sick are touched, which being finished, the Gospel is continued to the end of the chapter. The second Gospel is then begun, taken from the first chapter of St. John, at the first verse. After the eighth verse, the Surgeons, making three obeisances as formerly, come up the second time with the sick people ; the Clerk of the Closet then on his knees delivers to the King the gold strung on a white silk ribbon, and the King puts it about their necks, as the Chaplain reads the ninth verse, “That was the true light, which lighteneth every man which cometh into the world,” which he repeats as each receives the gold. The Gospel is then continued, ending with the fourteenth verse. The Gospel ended, the Chaplain, with the rest of the people on their knees, pronounces these prayers :—

“ Lord, have mercy upon us.

“ *Christ, have mercy upon us.*

“ Lord, have mercy upon us.”

These are followed by the Lord’s Prayer, and after it these versicles, the responses being made by those that come to be healed :—

Versicle. “ O Lord, save Thy servants,

Response. “ *Which put their trust in Thee.*

“ Send help unto them from above ;

“ *And evermore mightily defend them.*

“ Help us, O God our Saviour ;

“ *And for the glory of Thy Name deliver us ; be merciful to us sinners for Thy Name’s sake.*

“ O Lord, hear our prayers ;

“ *And let our cry come unto thee.*”

Then the Chaplain reads this prayer :—“ O Almighty God, who art the giver of all health, and the aid of them that seek to Thee for succour, we call upon Thee for thy help and goodness, mercifully to be showed to these thy servants, that they being healed of their infirmities, may give thanks to Thee in thy Holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen”—and concludes with the “ *Gratia Domini.*”

The ceremony over, the Lord Chamberlain, and two other nobles having brought up linen, with a basin and ewer to wash the King's hands, he takes leave of the people, "and they joyfully and thankfully do every one return home, praising God and their good King." (Browne, 101.)

The form of ceremonies here given is that followed in the reign of Charles II.,⁷ of whose Healings, public and private, we have a fuller account than of any other sovereign's. Although the Healing was always a religious ceremony and performed with prayers,⁸ there is no record of any prescribed form, or ritual, being in use before the time of Henry VII. : and the ritual adopted by that monarch underwent many alterations in different reigns down to the time of Queen Anne, the last of our Sovereigns who officiated. Henry VII. seems to have been the first King of England who established a particular service or form of ceremonies : indeed, we have no account before his reign of any kind of formality being used in conferring the Royal Touch, beyond the giving of alms, or a single piece of money—sometimes with a prayer.

This new ritual was in Latin, the rubric being in English, and was taken partly, with some alterations, from two forms in use in the Roman Catholic Church, the *Blessing for sore eyes*, and the *Exorcismus adversus spiritus immundos*.⁹ After confession and absolution, the first Gospel, the same that was ever after retained, was read ; during which the sick people were presented by the Clerk of the Closet and touched, the King laying his hand upon the sore places, and were afterwards led away by the Surgeon. During the reading of the second Gospel, which continued to be used till the reign of Queen Anne, the sick were again presented singly ; the sore, or the patient's neck, was crossed with an angel noble, which was then hanged about the patient's neck, to be worn (in the words of the rubric), till they were "full whole." A Collect was then said for the sick, the Chaplain first saying—*Sit nomen Domini benedictum.*

⁷ Maskell (*Monumenta Ritualia*, vol. III., clvii.) says that the form occurs often in Prayer Books of Charles I. and II. and James II. I have examined all, or nearly all, the copies in the Bodleian Library, without finding it in any ; nor have I

found it in those at Merton, Magdalen, and St. John's Colleges.

⁸ John of Gadsden, *Rosa Anglicana practica Medicinæ*, lib. ii., cap. 1.

⁹ Beckett, Append. iv., vi.

The King answering—*Ex hoc, nunc, et usque in seculum.*

Domine, exaudi orationem meam,
Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

Oremus,—Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, salus æterna credentium, exaudi nos pro famulis tuis, pro quibus misericordiæ tuæ imploramus auxilium, ut redditâ sibi sanitate, gratiarum tibi in Ecclesiâ tuâ referant actiones. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen. And the service concludes with a longer prayer, also in Latin, “to be said secretly after the sick persons are departed from the King, at his pleasure.”¹

The form used by Queen Elizabeth began with the first Gospel ;² during the reading of the eighteenth verse, the sick were touched, and retired till the Gospel was ended. The second Gospel was then read ; during the reading of the ninth verse, the sick were again presented to receive the golden angel, the Queen first marking, as did her predecessors, the seat of disease with the sign of the cross,³ praying for them and blessing them. The Queen and the whole congregation kneeling then pray,

Κυριε Ελεησον,
 Χριστε Ελεησον.

The Lord’s Prayer followed, and after it the versicles and responses already mentioned as used in English by Charles II. This prayer was then said, varying a little from those used by Henry VII. and Charles II. Omnipotens Deus, æterna salus omnium in te sperantium, exaudi nos te precamur nomine famulorum tuorum hic presentium, pro quibus misericors auxilium tuum imploramus, ut salute acceptâ tibi gratias agant in sanctâ Ecclesiâ tuâ, per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen. The congregation were then dismissed “usitatâ formulâ.”

¹ The Service used by Queen Mary forms the second part of an illuminated manuscript in the possession of Cardinal Wiseman. It was exhibited by Sir Henry Ellis at a Meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, and is fully described in the Minutes of Meeting, Feb. 3, 1853. The only variation to be noticed is that the Clerk of the Closet, not the Chirurgeon, is directed to lead away the patients from the Sovereign. The first part of the Manuscript contains the Office for the Consecration of

Cramp-rings. This I suppose to be the “fair manuscript” from which Beckett copied the Office. (App. V.) He says it was discontinued under King Edward VI., but under Queen Mary it was designed to be revived.

² Tooker, Char., c. vii. It does not appear whether the service was in Latin or English.

³ Numismate, crucis signum, quâ parte morbus est, facit. Tooker, p. 96.

The sign of the cross in giving the gold was discontinued by the Queen's successors,⁴ until James II., who returned to it. He also restored the use of the ritual of Henry VII., except that it was now used in English,—at least it seems most probable that it was so used.⁵

In Queen Anne's reign the ceremonial was again altered. It is considerably shorter, and varies much from any of those hitherto used. It begins with a Collect, the fourth of those at the end of the Communion Service,—*Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, &c.* The Gospel follows, taken from St. Mark, and after it the Lord's Prayer. The sick are then presented one by one on their knees, and while the Queen is laying her hands upon them, and putting the gold about their necks, the Chaplain says,—*God give a blessing to this work, and grant that these sick persons on whom the Queen lays her hands, may recover, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* After all have been presented, the versicles and responses are said, the same, except in one or two expressions, as in Charles II.'s form. The same prayer for the sick is said, followed by one of the prayers from the Visitation of the Sick,—*The Almighty God, who is a most strong tower, &c. ;* and the ceremony concludes with the *Gratia Domini.* This form will be found in many editions of the Common Prayer Book of that period, after the four State Services, and before the Articles of Religion. The earliest edition in which I have seen it, is in 1707, and the latest in 1724, after the accession of George I., the necessary alterations being made for its use by “the King,” instead of “the Queen.”⁶ It is not generally named with other forms of prayer in the Table of Contents.

The Royal Touch was not always conferred with the

⁴ All along King Edward VI.'s and Queen Elizabeth's reigns, when the *strumosi*, such as had the King's Evil, came to be touched, the manner was then for her to apply the sign of the cross to the tumor ; which raising cause of jealousies, as if some mysterious operation were imputed to it, that wise and learned King [James I.] not only (with his son, the late King,) practically discontinued it, but ordered it to be expunged out of the prayers relating to that cure : which hath proceeded as effectually, that omission notwithstanding, as it did before. L'E-

trange, *Alliance of Div. Off.*, ch. viii., p. 373.

⁵ The Ritual in English was printed in 1686, by “Henry Hills, printer to the King's most excellent Majesty for his Household and Chappel ;” and it was reprinted in 1789, with the addition of the Office of Consecrating Cramp-rings.

⁶ By what authority was the Service printed with the Prayer-Book, or continued and altered upon the accession of George I. ? Through the kindness of the Secretary of State, I have searched at the State Paper Office, and the Privy Council Office, but without finding any.

accompaniment of all these ceremonies, or the attendance of so many of the required officers. A “private Healing” was held sometimes,⁷ where the number touched was probably small. Browne (Char. Bas., ch. x., p. 177,) mentions the case of a patient of his own, a young child, who was touched by Charles II. “amongst some others,” at a private healing at Whitehall, where he alone waited. The three persons named in the parish register at Camberwell, are said to have been touched when the King was on a visit at the house of Sir Thomas Bond in the neighbourhood.⁸ The entry in the register is in November, 1684. 21. Ann dau. of Georg. King, touched, aged 18 years. (The baptisms of two children are entered ; then follows) 26. Barnabas Scudamor touched, aged 9 years. John Davis touched, aged one year.

The patients most frequently presented for healing were those exhibiting confirmed symptoms of the disease, though in an early stage, in its best known and most easily recognised character—that of glandular swellings in the neck and throat. These are among the earliest to make their appearance, and often among the most obstinate in yielding to treatment, in the habit of body then and still known popularly in England as “the Evil,” or “the King’s Evil ;” though at how early a period first called by the name is not clear. Wiseman (Of the King’s Evil, chap. 3,) says, “In case of the King’s Touch; the resolution [subsidence of the swelling without forming matter,] doth often happen where our endeavors have signified nothing.” Other forms of the disease were often presented—such as enlargements of the lips, diseases of the eyes and ears, and joints, as well as open sores in various parts of the body and limbs.⁹ Indeed, the only case recorded to have been touched by Edward the Confessor was of this kind, attended with blindness.¹ The *cure* of the patient did not always follow immediately upon the Healing ; nor, indeed, was it expected. It advanced by degrees, often requiring a considerable time to be completed ;

⁷ Wiseman, 251.

⁸ Brayley and Britton, History of Surrey, vol. iii., p. 249.

⁹ Dr. Daniel Turner ; Peck, *Desiderata Curiosa*, quoted by Badger, p. 37 ; Browne Char. Bas., ch x., 152, 154 ; T. Allen, M.D.,

Xειρεξοχη, p. 8 ; Clowes, p. 48 ; Tooker, p. 100 ; Wiseman, 248 ; also bronchocele and meliceris, Browne, *Chœradelogia*, ch. iii.

¹ W. of Malmesbury, *De Gest. Reg. Angl.*, ii. 13.

and in many instances it failed altogether.² A second, and even a third healing was sometimes desired by a patient, and approved by the Surgeon ; the patient being required to bring again the gold given at the former Healing.³

During the reigns of the later Sovereigns, the numbers flocking to the Court from all parts of the kingdom, many of them ill able to bear the charge of their journey, rendered frequent Healings necessary ; although stated seasons were observed—as Easter and Whitsuntide, or Michaelmas. When the Court was in London they were held—at least by Charles II.—at the Banqueting House, Whitehall ; at other times at Windsor, or wherever the Court happened to be, as at Langley by Henry VIII.,⁴ at Kenilworth by Queen Elizabeth,⁵ at Newmarket and other places by Charles II.,⁶ at Bath by James II.,⁷ and thiere and at Oxford by Queen Anne.⁸ The hot season was avoided ; Michaelmas being substituted for Whitsuntide by Proclamation of Charles I., as “more convenient both for the temperature of the season, and in respect of any contagion which may happen in this near access to his Majesty’s sacred person.”⁹ This contagion did not apply to the evil itself, but to the epidemic diseases frequently prevailing : in other Proclamations the plague and small-pox are mentioned by name.¹

It was the custom at the Healing to present a piece of gold to each of the patients. This—though said to be “but as a sacred gift and pledge of the King’s charity”²—came afterwards to be thought an important element in the ceremony ; and some cases are recorded of the return of the

² Beckett, 24. Browne, *Adenographia*, ch. xiv.

³ Browne, *Char. Bas.*, ch. vii., p. 93 ; viii., p. 106.

⁴ *Privy Purse Expenses*, Sir H. Nicolas.

⁵ Lanelham. In looking through the reprint in Nicholls’s *Progresses*, I did not observe a healing mentioned.

⁶ Browne, *Char. Bas.*, p. 170.

⁷ *Life of Bishop Ken*, by a Layman.

⁸ Tindal, *Hist. of England*, book xxvi. Oldmixon, *Hist. of England*. Barrington, *Observations on the more ancient Statutes*.

⁹ Beckett, *Append. ii.* A similar proclamation by James I. is quoted by Pettigrew, 133.

¹ See Pettigrew, on *Superstitions connected with the History and Practice of Medicine and Surgery*, 1844, p. 136.

² Browne, *Char. Bas.*, p. 102. Fallopius, Professor of Anatomy at Padua about 1552, gives a different reason for the alms of the French King, — Rex largitur cuique ægro monetam ut seutatum aureum duos et tres pro ratione itineris longi, quod a patiente fieri debet in redeundo ad propriam patriam. Si verò patiens sit ex Gallis, largitur ipsi monetam argenteam vel dimidiā ut ipsi videtur. *De medicam. simpl. Tom. II. tract. ix. c. xix.*

disease upon the loss of the gold.³ Some patients on applying for a second healing, would desire to have a new piece in exchange for that given at the former Healing.⁴ Others, probably soon after obtaining it, parted with it ; for the medal was often to be seen in the shops of the goldsmiths.⁵

Edward I. gave a small sum of money, probably as alms.⁶ On the establishment of a ritual Henry VII. gave a piece of gold—the angel noble, a coin then in general circulation—in fact, the smallest gold coin, worth about six shillings and eight pence. This coin had on one side a figure of the angel Michael overcoming the dragon, and on the other a ship on the waves. The coins of the period generally bore some religious inscription, and the angel had, *Per crucem tuam salva nos, Christe Redemptor*. Queen Mary's and Queen Elizabeth's angels bore, *A Domino factum est istud, et est mirabile*. The angels of James I. and Charles I. are smaller in size, and bear a shorter inscription. James I.'s have *A Domino factum est istud*. Charles I.'s—the last which were ever coined—have *Amor populi presidium Regis*. During the troubles he had not always gold to bestow, and he sometimes substituted pieces of silver, and perhaps brass ; and he often touched without giving anything.⁷ During Charles II.'s residence abroad, the patients who came to be touched brought their own gold.⁸ After the Restoration, as the attendance at the Healings increased, and the consequent demand for the gold became greater, small medals resembling the angels—which have obtained the name of touch-pieces—were coined specially for distribution at the Healings.⁹ They are much less than the angels in size and weight, and they seem of less pure gold : they bear round the Angel a still shorter legend, *Soli Deo gloria* ; which is continued on the touch-pieces of the succeeding reigns. There are two of James II., gold and silver, of the

³ Browne, Char. Bas., Address to the Reader ; also ch. viii. and x., Cases of cure by wearing the gold given to other patients. Proclamation, 1625, among Conway Papers. Sir Kenelm Digby, quoted by Moncenys, Travels, vol ii., p. 20. Wiseman, 247. Bp. Douglas, Criterion, 121.

⁴ Browne, Char. Bas., p. 108.

⁵ Browne, Char. Bas., p. 93.

⁶ Computus Hospitii, in the Tower, Beckett, 17.

⁷ Wiseman, 247. Browne, Char. Bas., ch. viii. x. Beckett, 27. Χειρεξοχη, p. 8. Badger, 57.

⁸ Browne, Char. Bas., p. 157.

⁹ Beckett, 47. An engraving of a stamp for an angel for Charles II. is given in Simon's Medals, &c., 1780, plate xxxix. ; but none are known to have been coined.

same size, but from different dies, and scarcely half the size of Charles II.'s. There are not any of William III., or Queen Mary. Queen Anne's is of gold, a little larger than James II.'s. The Pretender, as James III., had two, both of silver, small in size—about as large as James II.'s ; in one the ship is in full sail ; in the other, which is in higher relief and of better workmanship, evidently Italian, the ship is “taken aback.” None are known of Charles Edward. Of the Cardinal of York, as Henry IX., there are two ; in both the ship is “taken aback.”¹ Yet it is doubtful, I believe, whether he ever exercised, or even claimed, the power of healing.

With all the industry bestowed on the investigation of “this curious and not uninstructive object of enquiry,”² by many learned writers of different periods, the origin of the custom continues, and probably ever will be, involved in obscurity. The general concurrence of historians attributes the first possession of the power to Edward the Confessor ;³ although but one instance is recorded of his exercising it, and that by a historian (William of Malmesbury, lib. ii., c. 13,) who wrote his history about eighty years after the King's death : he adds however, *Multotiens eum in Normanniâ hanc pestem sedâsse ferunt, qui interiùs ejus vitam neverunt.* Shakespeare, who always makes his picture perfect, often by anachronism, describes him freely exercising the power, and giving gold, which was not in circulation before the time of Henry III., or probably Edward III., with prayers, and attended by a Doctor.

Malcolm (a fugitive from his own kingdom, after the murder of his father, and residing at the court of Edward the Confessor), enquires of the Doctor—

Comes the King forth, I pray you ?

Doctor. Aye, Sir, there are a crew of wretched souls,
That stay his cure : their malady convinces
The great assay of art ; but, at his touch,

¹ For much interesting information on this subject I am indebted to Mr. Hawkins, whose kindness in communicating information, when engaged in this and other investigations in the Medal Room of the British Museum, I take this opportunity of acknowledging. The medal represented by Pettigrew, figs. 7 and 8, and

described (page 126) as probably a touch-piece of the Pretenders, is a token or counter, and older, I think, than their day.

² Aikin, quoted by Nicholls, Lit. Anecd.

³ Alford, Annales Ecclesiastici et Civiles, ad an. 1062. Harpsfield, Hist. Angl. Eccles., undec. sec., cap. iii.

TOUCH-PIECES, STRUCK FOR DISTRIBUTION AT THE HEALINGS.



Charles II. (Gold.)



(Gold.)



James II.



Anne. (Gold.)



The Pretender, as James III.

(Silver.)



The Cardinal of York, as Henry IX.

(Silver.)

Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.

As the Doctor withdraws, *Macduff*, a stranger to the court, asks—

What's the disease he means ?

Malcolm tells him—

'Tis call'd the Evil ;—

A most miraculous work in this good King :
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits Heaven,
Himself best knows : but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures ;
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers : and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding Royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy ;
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.—*Macbeth*, Act iv. s. iii.

Contemporary chronicles, however, do not mention the power ; nor historians who wrote nearer his age than William of Malmsbury :⁴ nor is it attributed to him among his other gifts—*signa ac virtutes*—in the Bull of Canonisation of Pope Alexander III., about a hundred years after his death.⁵ It must have been acknowledged to reside in the King as early as Henry II. : for Petrus Blesensis, Archdeacon of Bath, and afterwards of London, Chaplain to the King, alludes to it (about 1180,) as being notorious : nec in vacuum accepit unctionis Regiae sacramentum ; cujus efficacia si nescitur, aut in dubium venit, fidem ejus plenissimam faciet defectus inguinariæ pestis, et curatio scrofularum. (Epist. cl., ad Clericos Aulæ Regiæ.) After an interval of another century we find Edward I. touching ; he is said to have healed 182 persons :⁶ and the power of healing was fully recognised in him, as it has been in his successors,⁷ being frequently exercised in public and private.

It is said that Queen Elizabeth, at one period of her reign,

⁴ Ingulphus. Marianus Scotus, and Florence of Worcester. Ealred, Abbot of Rievaulx, 1164, in the Life and Miracles of Edw. the Conf., alludes to the history already quoted from William of Malmsbury, Beckett, 14.

⁵ Beckett, Append. I.

⁶ "The accounts of the Household in the 6th of Edward I., which there is scarce a man in England beside Mr. Anstis hath ever looked into."—Whiston, Memoirs.

⁷ Polydore Virgil, Hist. Angl., lib. viii.

did for some time discontinue the touching.⁸ This is the first notice I have found of the Sovereign declining it. Yet she did exercise it at other times frequently.⁹ The virtue of her cures is said by a Roman Catholic writer¹ to be due to the holy sign of the cross used in the ceremony, and not to any virtue proceeding from the Queen. Among the patients touched by the Queen was a Roman Catholic (*moribus quidem non incultum,*) who having vainly sought relief from medicine, declared upon his restoration to health, that he was now convinced from experience that the Pope's excommunication was of no effect, for if the Queen did not hold the sceptre rightly, and of Divine authority, her efforts could not be blessed with success.² James I. touched the son of the Turkish Ambassador, upon the father's request; and on taking his leave the ambassador thanked the King for the cure.³

Oliver Cromwell, though claiming or exercising many of the Royal functions, never attempted this.⁴ The Duke of Monmouth, claiming to be the rightful Sovereign, touched several persons during the rising in the West of England; and in a newspaper of the day it is said with success.⁵ Among the accusations against him, on his trial at Edinburgh for high treason, for "exercising the functions of royal dignity," he is charged with having "touched children of the King's Evil," and two witnesses prove it, as being done at Taunton.⁶

William III., although pressed to exercise it, altogether abstained;⁷ being persuaded, Rapin says, (Hist. of England, book iv.,) that the sick would not suffer by the omission. Whiston, who believed (if we may judge from expressions in his Memoirs) in the efficacy of the Royal Touch, says that he had been informed that the King was once prevailed upon to touch a patient. The last of our sovereigns who exercised the power, was Queen Anne; and among the

⁸ Dr. H. Stubbe, the Miraculous Conformist, Oxford, 1666, p. 9. Beckett, 48, 57.

⁹ Tooker, *Curatio non tam annua, quam menstrua, ac penè quotidiana est,* 18, 98. *Multa millia sanâsse,* 105.

¹ Richard Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon. What would he now say were he living, and had seen it done by three generations of Kings without the sign of the Cross? Wiseman, 246.

² Tooker, 91.

³ Sir John Finett, *Philoxenis,* 1618. Nicholls, *Royal Progresses.*

⁴ Χειρεξοχη, 8. Browne, *Char. Bas.* says, he "tryed it," p. 81.

⁵ Harris's *Protestant Intelligeneer;* Beckett, 31.

⁶ Howell's *State Trials,* vol. xi., 1036, 1059, 1066.

⁷ Sir Richard Blackmore, M.D., *Discourses on the Gout, Rheumatism, and King's Evil,* Preface, 61.

latest occasions, if not the last, was that on which Dr. Johnson, then a child between four and five years old, was touched, with 200 others.⁸ An English gentleman applied to George I. soon after his accession, on behalf of his son, and was referred to the Pretender, as possessing this hereditary power of the Stuarts. He repaired to the continent, his son was touched, recovered his health, and the father became converted to the cause of the family.⁹ The Pretender claimed the power,¹ and, indeed, exercised it in Paris, touching the sick in the hospitals there :² and his son in 1745, as Prince of Wales, and Regent for his father, once touched a child in Edinburgh.³

The numbers touched in some reigns were extraordinary ; indeed, they almost exceed belief. In Queen Elizabeth's time the Healings are said to have been monthly, and even daily ; many thousands, one eye-witness says, were healed.⁴ The preacher at St. Mary's, on the anniversary of the Queen's accession, 1602, says the number amounted to three or four hundred a-year.⁵ Of Charles II.'s Healings we have the fullest particulars. In his reign a register was kept by the Serjeant of the Chapel Royal, and afterwards by the Keeper of the Closet. Upon the Restoration public Healings were held frequently—three times a-week—till September, 1664, when they ceased, interrupted probably by the removal of the Court upon the approach of the plague. During that period 22,982 were touched. These public Healings, the only ones of which an exact account of the numbers touched has been kept, were resumed in May 1667, and from that time to April 1682, the farther number of 67,816 were touched, making altogether the almost incredible number of 90,798 touched by one Sovereign :⁶ and the historian of these facts adds, that the following year

⁸ March 30, 1714. Nicholls, *Lit. Anecd.*, ii., "Carte," note, quoting "the newspapers of the time."

⁹ Chambers, *Hist. of the Rebellion*, 1827, vol. i., p. 183, 185.

¹ Sir R. Blackmore, *Discourses*, Pref., 67.

² *Ceremonies et Prières du Sacre des Rois*, Paris, 1825, p. 104, note.

³ Chambers, *Hist. of the Rebellion*.

⁴ Tooker, 91.

⁵ A Sermon preached at St. Mary's in Oxford, the 17th day of November, 1602,

in defence of the festivities of the Church of England, &c, by John Howson, D.D., one of her Highness's Chaplains, Canon of Christ Church, and Vice-Chancellor of the University, quoted in the *British Magaz.* Aug. 1848, p. 136.

⁶ Browne, from whose work, *Charisma Basilicon*, all succeeding writers have copied the number (Carr, *Epist. Med.*, xiv., Beckett, 33), calls it 92,107 : but the figures set down to each month in the different years make only 90,798.

“above 6000” were touched.⁷ The years in which the largest numbers were touched, are the first of the series (1660) and the last two: in 1660, 6005 were touched; in 1681, 6007; and in 1682, 8477: the average number per year is 4323. The greatest numbers are generally in the spring; and the greatest in any single month are 2461 in April 1681, and 2471 in April 1682—the concluding months of the last two years. Bishop Cartwright (Diary, 28 Aug. 1687,) records his attendance on one occasion, when James II. healed 350 persons.

The value of the gold distributed must have been in proportion to the numbers touched. But the same minuteness has not been observed in recording it. In Henry VIII.’s reign each person seems to have received seven shillings and six pence, to which the value of the angel was raised in his 18th year (1526-7).⁸ In Queen Elizabeth’s time each received ten shillings, the value of the angel.⁹ Fabian Phillips in 1663 (On Purveyance, p. 257,) says the yearly charge was at least 3000*l.*, the gold being of the value of ten shillings given to every one at the Healing. The substitution of silver touch-pieces by James II. rendered the ceremony less burdensome to that Sovereign after his abdication.

The healing power of the Royal Touch thus conferred was universally believed—not by the uneducated, or the poor alone, but by the highest in the state, and the best and most enlightened of those who lived during this long period; and, among that number, by the physicians and surgeons of the day, many of them possessing acquirements far in advance of the knowledge of their age—men who, as Bishop Douglas observes (Criterion, or Miracles examined, ed. 1832, p. 126), “are not very ready in admitting that cures may be effected without making use of the medicines which they themselves prescribe.”

Gilbertus Anglicus, a physician who lived about the time of Henry III. and Edward I., is one of the earliest medical writers, whose work is known, who alludes to the exercise of

⁷ Browne, Char. Bas., p. 79.

⁸ Privy Purse Expenses, 1529—32, Sir H. Nicolas. Snelling, View of the Gold Coinage. The Angel was first coined

⁵ Edw. IV., of the value of six shillings and eight pence: the noble being raised to eight shillings and four pence. The

value varied in different reigns; *e. g.*, James I. raised it in his ninth year to eleven shillings. Charles I.’s was worth ten shillings.

⁹ Aureo nummo solidorum decem. Tooker, 96.

the power, in words which show the antiquity of the practice. He says scrofula is also called the King's Evil, because the kings have the power to cure it. (Compendium Medicinæ, lib. iii.)

John of Gadsden, a Fellow of Merton College,¹ physician to Edward II., remarkable as being the first Englishman who was consulted at Court as physician, advises recourse to the Royal touch in desperate cases, as the Kings have the power of curing it. (Rosa Anglicæ, lib. ii. c. 1.)

Archbishop Bradwardine, writing in the time of Edward III., appeals to the writings of former times, and the concurring testimony of the kingdoms of that day for the cures performed by the Kings of England and France, by prayer and blessing, touching with the sign of the cross, in the name of Jesus Christ. (In *Libro de causâ Dei*, lib. i. cap. 1., coroll. pars 32, p. 39, quoted by Freind, *Hist. of Physic*, vol. ii., App., and in L'Estrange's *Alliance of Divine Offices*, Oxf. 1846, additional notes.)

Sir John Fortescue, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and afterwards Chancellor to Henry VI., writing, upon the accession of Henry IV., in defence of the House of Lancaster, mentions the power as one of the attributes of the Sovereign, though one which does not descend in the female line to a Queen. (Freind, *Hist. of Physic*, vol. ii., App.)

Andrew Borde, a learned man, a physician in the time of Henry VIII., alludes to the power in his two works, the "Introduction of Knowledge," (chap. i.) and the "Breviary of Health," (chap. ccxxxvi.)

Dean Tooker, who, as one of Queen Elizabeth's Chaplains, for several years attended the public Healings, bears witness that many wretched sufferers were restored to their former health, by the Queen's touching, aided by the prayers of the whole Church assembled joining in the solemn ceremony. (Charisma, sive Donum Sanationis, pp. 32, 91.)

Clowes, a man of high surgical reputation, Surgeon to St. Bartholomew's and Christ's Hospitals, appointed to attend the forces by sea and land in the wars of Queen Elizabeth's time, afterwards sworn Surgeon to the Queen, and subsequently Serjeant Surgeon to James I., describing the occasional malignity of scrofulous ulcers, says (p. 4), "These

¹ Ad integrum septennium publicus medicinæ Professor. Bp. Tanner, Biblioth. Brit. Hib., quoting Pits. MS. Mert.

kinds do rather presage a divine and holy curation, which is most admirable to the world, that I have seen and known performed and done by the sacred and blessed hands of the Queen's most Royal Majesty, whose happiness and felicity the Lord long continue." After relating a cure by the Queen's touch, he concludes his observations: "And here I do confidently affirm and stedfastly believe that (for the certain cure of this most miserable malady) when all arts and sciences do fail, her Highness is the only day-star, peerless and without comparison;" ending with a prayer, "that she may for ever reign over us (if it please the Lord God) even unto the end of the world, still to cure and heal many thousands more than ever she hath yet done." (A right fruitful and approved Treatise, for the artificial cure of that malady called in Latin *Struma*, and in English the Evil, cured by Kings and Queens of England, 1602, p. 50.)²

Fuller says, if any doubt the cures, they are remitted to their own eyes for farther confirmation.³ (Church History, vol. i., A.D. 1061—1066.)

Wiseman, Chief Surgeon in Charles I.'s army, and afterwards Serjeant Surgeon to Charles II., whose writings are deservedly held in respect by surgeons at the present day, says, "I myself have been a frequent eye-witness of many hundreds of cures performed by his Majesty's Touch alone, without any assistance of chirurgery; and those, many of them, such as had tired out the endeavors of able chirurgeons before they came thither. It were endless to recite what I myself have seen, and what I have received acknowledgements of by letter, not only from the several parts of this nation, but also from Ireland, Scotland, Jersey, and Garnsey." (Treatises, book iv. c. i.)

Archbishop Sancroft, in the sermon preached at Westminster Abbey, upon the first consecration of Bishops after

² Among the commendatory verses prefixed are some by Thomas Parkin, "Chirurgie Professor," beginning—

"The happy sacred hand of our dread sovereign Queen,
The princely loving zeal of her most Royal heart,
Throughout her highness' land, her subjects all have seen,
To cure, to help, to heal, our care, our harm, our smart."

³ See, in confirmation, Heylin's *Animadversions, Examen Historicum*, 1659, p. 47 "The curative adjunct with a *tangit*

te Rex, sanat Deus, is used in the conveyance of that charism, or miraculous gift of Healing, which, derived from the infancy of the Church, the inaugurated Monarchs of this land so happily enjoy: in which expression of their sanative virtue they not only surpass the fabulous cures of Pyrrhus or Vespasian, of which Pliny and others make mention, but the pretended virtues of other Christian Monarchs." John Bulwer, M.D., *Chiromantia, or the Natural language of the Hand*, 1644, p. 148.

the Restoration, alludes to the gift of healing residing in the sovereign.⁴ (British Magazine, August, 1848, p. 141.)

Browne, Surgeon in ordinary to Charles II., the historian of his Healings, from whose work I have drawn largely in this account, speaking of himself, says, “Having evermore been conversant in chirurgery almost from my cradle, being the sixth generation of my own relations, all eminent masters of our profession ; some of the latter of which have been extraordinary well known for their parts and skill by many of the most worthy and knowing masters of our society. I came early, also, to the practice thereof in this great city, and have for above twenty-four years seen the practic, as well as read the theoretical part thereof; and this not at whiles and intervals, but I had the eye of the hospital as my first and early gleanings ; and since I could write man, the late wars had my skill shown on myself as well as many others who were committed to my charge.” (Chœradelogia, Address to the Reader.) Yet he did not attribute the sole merit of the cures of which he was so frequent a witness, to the bare imposition of his Royal master’s hand : for he says, “Whence it cometh, and what the efficient cause thereof is, whether proceeding from the naked discourse of the words used at the ceremony, or the solemnity of the pious and religious action, or of any created virtue arising hence, I shall presume to offer this as a foundation against all dispute whatsoever. That no miracle was ever done by an inherent virtue in man alone, not this of his Majesty’s royal healing, procuring and affording hereby this health to the sick, which we daily see and find they do hereby purchase and enjoy ; but there is and must be God Almighty’s hand going along with it, for no mortal’s virtue or piety or power hath strength or efficacy enough in it to perform this sovereign sanative faculty: nor can the ceremonies or vestments anywise effect the same.” And as a farther acknowledgement of the King’s success, he adds, “I do humbly presume to assert that more souls have been healed by his Majesty’s sacred hand in one year than have ever been cured by all the physicians and Chirurgeons of his

⁴ “ Let us hope well of the *healing* of the *wounds of the daughter of our people*, since they are under the cure of those very hands, upon which God hath entailed a miraculous gift of healing, as if it were on purpose to raise up our hopes into

some confidence, that we shall owe one day to those sacred hands, next under God, the healing of the Church’s and the people’s evils, as well as of the King’s.”—Sermon, London, 1660, p. 33.

three kingdoms ever since his happy Restoration." (Charisma Basilicon, 18, 19, 81.)

Sir Thomas Browne's opinion is shown by his advising patients to avail themselves of it :⁵ one patient, the child of a nonconformist, he sent to Breda to be touched by Charles II. (Char. Basil., p. 187.)

Bishop Bull says, "That divers persons desperately laboring under it have been cured by the mere touch of the Royal hand, assisted with the prayers of the priests of our Church attending, is unquestionable ; unless the faith of all our ancient writers, and the consentient report of hundreds of most credible persons in our own age attesting the same be to be questioned. And yet they say some of those diseased persons return from the sovereign remedy *re infectâ*, without any cure done upon them. How comes this to pass ? God hath not given this *gift of Healing* to our Royal Line, but that he still keeps the reins of it in his own hands, to let them loose, or restrain them, as he pleaseth." (Sermon V., p. 133. Oxford, 1827.)

Anstis, Garter King at arms, says, "The miraculous gift in curing this distemper by the royal touch of our King, as well as the French King, is undeniable." (Discourse on Coronations, quoted in Whiston's Memoirs.)

Among Dean Swift's letters the following passage occurs : — "I visited the Duchess of Ormond this morning : she does not go over with the Duke [to Ireland]. I spoke to her to get a lad touched for the evil, the son of a grocer in Capel Street, one Bell—the ladies have bought sugar and plums of him. Mrs. Mary used to go there often. This is Patrick's account ; and the poor fellow has been here some months with his boy. But the Queen has not been able to touch, and it now grows so warm, I fear she will not at all." (Journal to Stella, Letter 22, Chelsea, 8 May, 1711.)

Carte, the historian, lost the patronage of the City of London, for asserting his belief that the power of healing existed in the Stuarts : the Corporation, by a vote in 1748, withdrew their subscription to his work. (Nicholls's Literary Anecdotes, vol. ii.)

Since the Sovereigns have ceased to touch, the history has been examined with care by numerous writers of the last century, of whom it may be sufficient to mention these.⁶

⁵ Pettigrew, 149, remarking on Wilkin's Life of Sir T. Browne.

⁶ "Absit ut vim Regiam quasi cælitùs delapsam creditam, et mirâ hominum

Beckett, a surgeon, F.R.S., published a pamphlet in 1722, with a valuable collection of authentic records, to which reference has been already made several times; and although the general tenor of his opinion is against any inherent virtue in the Royal Touch, he seems unwillingly to bear testimony to the cures which followed it. He says, “For although I do not go about to deny that cures have been sometimes effected by the King’s touch, yet it will be perhaps impossible to prove them supernatural or miraculous” (p. 24).

Turner, a physician, in 1722, reports the case of a patient of his own, who after defying his best endeavours at relief, was cured in a few days after being touched by Queen Anne; and he adds, “I pretend only to make good the assertion that such cures have been wrought.” Referring to the large numbers touched since the Restoration, he says, “It may be objected that among a hundred thousand it would be very strange if divers should not afterwards recover. I answer, that if any of those have been attended with such circumstances that the alteration can not fairly be imputed to any other cause, it makes sufficiently for our position; but instead of one we have many hundreds where the evidence is undeniable.” (The Art of Surgery, vol. I., p. 158.)

Badger, an apothecary, who published a pamphlet in 1748, to which I have already more than once referred, says, “I can see no room we have in the least to doubt the certainty of the cure by the Royal Touch. Many hundreds of families in this great city only, are living evidences of what I assert.” (Pp. 1, 2, 63.)

Bishop Douglas, in a careful examination of the whole question, quotes the testimony of Mr. Dicken, Serjeant Surgeon to Queen Anne, and says the facts “can not be denied without resisting evidence far from contemptible.” (Criterion, or Miracles examined, p. 115.)

The Kings of France, it has been already mentioned, exercised the power, as well as our sovereigns;⁷ and some

frequentiâ stipatam, in sanandis strumis,
vel in quæstionem revocarem. . . . Absit
itaque ut tam injurius essem Serenissimi
Principis nostri prærogativæ plusquam
(ut ita dicam,) humanæ, vel ægrotantium
suorum commodis, ut quemlibet strumo-
sum contactui Regio inhiantem, ab illius
contactu dissuaderem; potius vota faciam,
quos *Rex tangit, Deus sanaret.* Verbo

itaque expediam quod sentio; Contactus
Regius potest esse (si olim fuit,) proficuus;
solet subinde esse irritus, nequit unquam
esse nocivus.”—Ric. Carr, M.D., Epist.
Medicinales, 1691. Ep. xiv.

⁷ Tooker, Wiseman, Freind, Allen. See
Butler, Lives of the Saints, Edw. the
Conf., note.

French writers claim a higher antiquity of the practice,⁸ and maintain that the Kings of England derived the power through them: while English historians, in acknowledging that equal virtue resided in the Kings of France, declare that it sprang first from the Kings of this country,⁹ and that the Kings of France had it only, as they express it, by a “sprig of right.”¹ They usually touched four times a year, at Easter, Whitsuntide, All Saints, and Christmas; and, upon supplication, at other festivals.² The cures are said to have been most frequent under the third race of kings, the Capets. (Menin, p. 197.) The power, we are told, was conferred on Clovis, the first Christian King,³ by gift from Heaven, upon his being anointed with the Holy Chrism, from which he and his successors obtained the title of “Most Christian,” and with it the power of healing scrofula. Other writers say that Philip I., contemporary with Edward the Confessor, was the first who touched;⁴ and it is added that he was afterwards deprived of the healing power on account of the irregularity of his life.⁵ Louis the Fat touched successfully, using the sign of the cross.

The ceremonial, as observed for some generations, seems to have been established by St. Louis,⁶ who was anointed and crowned as Louis IX., at the age of twelve years, in 1226. To the ceremonies formerly observed he added—or restored, perhaps—the sign of the cross impressed on the disease; that the cure should be attributed to the virtue of the cross, and not to any worthiness in the crown.⁷ On the third day after anointing and coronation, which took place at Rheims, the King went on a pilgrimage to Corbigny, about 120 miles distant, to perform a nine days’ devotion at the shrine of St. Marcoul, the patron saint of the church there. St. Marcoul died in 658;⁸ he is said to have performed many miracles in the cure of the disease; and from him the disease was called by some St. Marcoul’s Evil.⁹ The sick, said to have been very numerous, and coming from foreign countries as

⁸ Laurentius, Mezeray, Daniel.

⁹ H. Stubbe, M.D.

¹ Tooker, 84. Browne, Char. Bas., 65.

² Laurentius, 5.

³ Laurentius, 10, 170.

⁴ Dupteix, Daniel.

⁵ Guibert, Abbé de Nogent, de Pignoribus Sanctorum, l. i., c. 1.

⁶ Menin, An Historical and Chronological Treatise of the Anointing and Coro-

nation of the Kings and Queens of France, 1723, pp. 64, 195.

⁷ William of Nangis. Laurent, Pref., 15.

⁸ Menin. Butler, Lives of the Saints.

⁹ The Painted Chamber in the Palace at Westminster was formerly called the Chamber of St. Marcoul. Probably, Carte conjectures, it was the place where the Kings used to touch for the evil.—Hist. of England, vol. i., book iv., s. 42.

well as France, after being examined by the King's Chief Physician and Surgeon, were ranged on their knees on both sides of the body of the church—or, if too numerous, in the cloisters or park of the priory—the first place being given to the Spaniards, and the last to the French.¹ The King, uncovered, attended by the Captain of his Guards, the Great Almoner (who distributes the alms to the sick as they are touched), and by the chief Physician, who holds the patient's head, touches them, extending his right hand over their faces from the forehead to the chin, and from one cheek to the other, thus making the sign of the cross, and saying, in French, *the King touches, God cures thee.* Charles VII., in 1422, Louis XI., in 1461, and Charles VIII., in 1483, touched with these ceremonies. (Menin.)

Henry IV. was crowned at Chartres in 1594, and performed the nine days' devotion at St. Clou; the disturbed state of the country not allowing the procession to pass to Corbigny. Laurentius, his chief physician, Professor of Physic at Montpelier, says that Henry IV. healed all who applied (Preface), and that he had often counted 1500 at a Healing (6,182.) Many of the greatest sufferers, he says, were immediately relieved, and of 1000 more than 500 were perfectly healed within a few days (p. 9). Louis XIV. touched 2600 in the park of the Abbey of St. Remy, two days after his coronation: the war with which he was occupied hindering the pilgrimage to St. Marcoul's shrine, the nine days' devotion was continued at Rheims by one of the almoners. (Menin.) He also touched 1600 persons on Easter day, 1686; every foreigner received thirty sous, and every Frenchman fifteen.² Louis XV. touched more than 2000 at his coronation, 25th October, 1722, and not being able to proceed to Corbigny from the impracticable state of the roads at that late season of the year, the shrine of St. Marcoul was brought to Rheims, and the nine days' devotion was continued by one of the almoners. (Menin.)

The King of France, it is said, continued the practice till 1776.³ The authorised ceremonial for the coronation of Charles X., published in contemplation of the event, prescribes the ceremony;⁴ and I believe it was performed; but with what formality I have not heard.

¹ Laurentius, 8.

² Gemelli. Barrington, Observations on the more ancient Statutes, 107.

³ Pettigrew, 120.

⁴ Cérémonies et Prières du Sacre des Rois de France. Didot, 1825.

The power of curing scrofulous diseases by touching was not accorded to the King's hand alone : it has been assumed at different times by humbler hands. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and perhaps at an earlier period, the seventh son of a seventh son, without an intervening daughter, was thought by common report to possess this, with other healing powers ;⁵ exercising it—in France, at least—in the name of God and St. Marcoul, if fasting for three or nine days. The ninth son of a ninth son was also a claimant for the power. We have not, however, any records of their success—at least not any medical testimony.⁶ At the beginning of the present century a farmer in Devonshire, the ninth son of a ninth son, is said to have had success in this way.⁷ He “stroked for the evil” one day in every week, but not all who were sufferers : he picked his cases—a sure way to obtain a certain amount of apparent success.

The Salutators in Spain and the Low Countries professed to cure all outward sores by the touch, and the application of white linen.⁸ The prayers used are given by Beckett (App. 3), and in “Wonders no Miracles” (41—43.)⁹ They were prohibited from their performances in consequence of articles against them in the Ecclesiastical and Civil Courts ; of which the first is, “Because they are a lewd people, and unlikely to have that commerce with God they pretend to,” and the last, “Because they did a world of mischief, and little or no good.”

In the middle of the seventeenth century, Valentine Greatrakes, an Irish gentleman of good family, is reported to have cured many persons suffering from scrofulous and other diseases by stroking with his hands, and one where Charles II. had failed.¹ His success, which did not attend

⁵ Laurentius, 20, 73. *Xειρεξοχη*, 2. *Traité de la Guerison des Ecrouelles par l'attouchement des Septenaires*, Aix, 1643. Thiers, *Traité des Superstitions*, l. vi., c. 4. MS. Julius, f. 6. Cotton Library. See Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, Ed. the Conf., *Wonders no Miracles*, 1666, p. 28.

⁶ R. Carr, M.D., *Epist. Med.*, Ep. xiv.

⁷ Edinburgh Med. and Surg. Journal, iii., 185.

⁸ Stubbe (*Miraculous Conformist*, 9, 10), refers to Delrius, and Rodericus a Castro, *Med. Pol.*, l. iv., c. 3.

⁹ Perhaps Clowes alludes to these as “Exorcisms and the illusions of certaine charmes of clowtes and rags, vanities which make a shadow or shew of verity. . . . I have cured both old and young persons, when these charmers of clowtes and rags, with their incredible operations, have failed them, and proved flat foolery and absurdities.” (p. 19.)

¹ Beckett, 30, 31. *Philosoph. Transactions*, No. 256.—Being asked by Mr. Boyle what I thought of the cures of Valentine Greatrakes, with the fame of

all cases treated by him, did not last for a great length of time ; and before he discontinued the practice of touching or “stroking,” as it was called, he had departed from his original custom of merely *handling* the patient’s head and neck, or limbs, and he had adopted incisions, and some of the other rough surgical practice of his day, administering also internal medicines and local applications.²

Thus have I endeavoured to lay before you in a connected form some of the more prominent facts, as well as opinions, which the records of my own profession offer in illustration of this most remarkable phenomenon. A medical man, in investigating the history of a disease so extensively prevalent, can not shut his eyes to the fact that for some centuries the treatment (if I may use the word) of which the particulars have been given, was believed to be the most efficacious,³ as it was certainly the most agreeable, mode of cure, of this intractable disease. At this distance from the last “Public Healing,” it is not to be expected that, unsupported by modern professional authority, any one should attempt either to controvert, or to defend, the position maintained by writers of unquestionable character who lived in the time when this treatment was advised and adopted. And this short memoir will have answered its purpose, if it serves to point out for the guidance of more industrious enquirers who are disposed to follow in the same path, the leading outlines of a portion of our history so well attested, and too remarkable, as it seemed to me, to be forgotten.

which all places rung at that time, I told him my opinion was fixed about those cures some years before they were performed. For, that one Coker, by a very gentle chafing or rubbing of his hand, cured diseases ten years ago, to the best of my remembrance, as Greatrakes did, though not so many and various. . . . But it is in general to be observed, that

although he cured all those diseases, yet he did not succeed in all his applications, nor were his cures always lasting. Henry More, D.D., *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, Sect. lviii., Scholia.

² *Miraculous Conformist*, 3, 6, 24; *Wonders no Miracles*, 25; *Philosoph. Transactions*, 256.

³ B. Phillips, *Treatise on Scrofula*, 1846.



